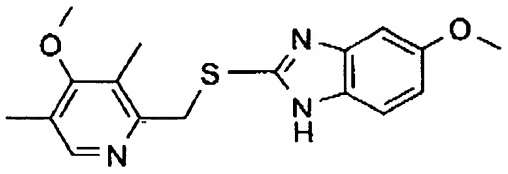
AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

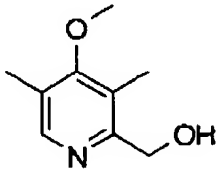
1. (Previously presented) A process for the manufacture of 5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)-methyl]-thio]-1H-benzimidazole of formula I,



I

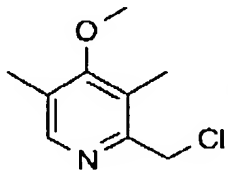
the process comprising the following reaction steps carried out in a consecutive order in a single solvent system without isolation of the intermediates formed during the process:

a) reacting (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl alcohol (pyrmethyl alcohol) of formula Ia,



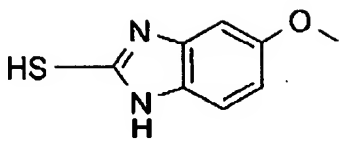
Ia

with a chloro-dehydroxylating agent to obtain (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl chloride (pyrmethyl chloride) of formula Ib; and



x HCl Ib;

b) reacting the (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl chloride of formula Ib with 2-mercapto-5-methoxybenzimidazole (metmercazole) of formula Ic,



Ic

in the presence of a base to obtain 5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)-methyl]thio]-1H-benzimidazole (pyrmetazole) of formula I, wherein the solvent system is the same for the entire reaction sequence, and wherein the solvent system comprises a water-immiscible organic solvent and an amount of water in the range of between 0.3 and 5.5 mg water per ml of the water-immiscible organic solvent.

2. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the water-immiscible organic solvent is toluene.

3. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the water-immiscible organic solvent is ethyl acetate.

4. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the water is present at the start of step a).

5. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the water is added during charging of the chloro-dehydroxylating agent.

6. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the water is added after charging of the chloro-dehydroxylating agent.

7. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the water is in the range of 0.3 - 5.0 mg/ml of the water-immiscible organic solvent.

8. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the water is in the range of 0.4 - 2.4 mg/ml of the water-immiscible organic solvent.

9. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the water is in the range of 1.0 - 2.4 mg/ml of the water immiscible organic solvent.

10. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction in step a) is carried out at a temperature in the range of between -5°C and +45°C.

11. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction in step a) is carried out at a temperature in the range of between -5°C and +35°C.

12. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction in step a) is carried out at a temperature in the range of between +10°C and +35°C.

13. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction in step a) is carried out at a temperature in the range of between +25°C and +35°C.

14. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the chloro-dehydroxylating agent is thionyl chloride.

15. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, further comprising adding an additional amount of water to the water-immiscible organic solvent during step a) after the start of the reaction.

16. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction in step b) is carried out at a temperature in the range of between +30°C and +60°C.

17. Canceled